



Kitchen Design Studio Advisory Report courtesy of Prestige Appliances

Making an informed decision about where to buy your new kitchen, should be an exciting and pleasurable process.

Unfortunately, as many new kitchen owners will tell you, comparing one Kitchen Company to the next can be difficult and confusing, and is often also a very time consuming exercise.

Having spent over 25 years within the Building and Renovating Industry (and 10 years specifically in kitchens), we frequently offer kitchen design information to our customers and over the years we have had many requests for our practical and impartial advice to be put into a report format – hence this report.

This report helps you make an informed decision, by revealing how the industry works “behind the scenes”, and offering you numerous money saving tips on kitchen design, and Appliance selection.

We also highlight many of the common pitfalls involved in kitchen selection together with a number of ways to help save money.

I hope you enjoy the information, and use it to your advantage.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tom Mullan". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Tom Mullan.

Prestige Appliances.

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1. Selecting the right kitchen company

Manufacturing

Does the kitchen company you're inquiring about do its own manufacturing, or do they buy from another source?

Most of the major problems that have occurred during kitchen renovations can be traced directly to companies that sub-contract out their manufacturing and installation.

Quite simply, if more than one company is involved in the design, manufacture, and installation of a kitchen – the chances of something going wrong are instantly multiplied.

Common problems range from simple inexperience to miss-communication between third the different parties involved.

Experience

Find out how long the company has been involved in renovations and how many years experience their designers have within the industry.

This may sound like stating the obvious, but in Kitchens there really is no substitute for real hands on experience.

Companies that have been in the industry over a long period of time have also had the opportunity to come face to face with all the different obstacles that can (and do) pop up.

Installation

Does the kitchen company use their own Installers and offer to organize the entire installation? What about Carpenters?, Electricians?, Plumbers?, and Tilers?

Make sure you ask these questions to avoid any hidden surprises.

Referral Work

Manufacturers that rely mainly upon referral work are usually the better companies to do business with; they will have a history of proven results which is directly reflected in the ongoing referral work they enjoy.



Pressure Salespeople

Like the used car industry, the kitchen industry is rife with snake oil salesmen types.

Beware of kitchen companies that pressure you to buy immediately or make a rushed decision (tip: they usually do this by offering fictitious discounts in order to persuade you to make a quick decision i.e. 25% off, of FREE Sink & Tap **(but only if you sign the contract tonight)**).

Ask yourself this – if a kitchen company can come up with a great deal tonight, why can't they do the same thing next week?

The truth is they can (but they want you to panic and make a decision straight-away). It's a common tactic, but we are constantly surprised at the amount of people who fall for it.

The 3 Most Common Mistakes 9 out of 10 buyers make



Mistake No 1. Throwing away \$3000 to \$5000 before you even start!

“Wouldn’t happen to me” I can hear you say, well ... experience has taught me otherwise.

I am often amazed that this happens to highly intelligent individuals every day of the week. This brief explanation may just save you from becoming the next victim.

Most so-called designers **are in fact commission salespeople**; you need to understand this. Their **only** interest is in coercing you into signing their order. The larger kitchen companies will pay their salespeople in between 15% and even 20% of the total kitchen contract price.

Let’s examine how it all works the following is a breakdown of the pricing structure, which is presented to the client (you).

Your Quote:

Inflated kitchen price given to client	= \$15,000
Less the so-called 25% discount (only if you sign tonight)	= \$ 3,750
Final agreed Contract Price of your kitchen (Fearful of missing out on the discount, you sign on the night)	You Pay \$11,250

Behind the scenes: The Breakdown of the price you paid

Final agreed Contract Price of your kitchen	\$11,250
The Kitchen companies normal selling price	\$ 9,250
Money left over between normal price and contact price (usually 50% goes to the salesperson, and the remaining 50% goes to the kitchen company)	\$11,250 minus \$ 2,000 = \$ 9,250
Salespersons standard commission of 15%	\$ 9,250 minus \$1388 = \$7,862
Standard Overhead price per kitchen sold (covers advertising, and travel expenses, etc)	\$ 7,862 minus \$175 = \$7,697

Bottom-line: You Paid **\$11,250**, but you really got a **\$7697 kitchen**.

Mistake No 2. Buying your kitchen from a small cabinetmaker

One of the biggest mistakes customers make is to take a well researched design from a good manufacturer and then give it to a cheaper cabinetmaker to try to copy.

The end result is nearly always a botched up job, it really is better to pay the little extra to avoid all the disappointment.

In other words, your disappointment will be remembered long after the cheap price has been forgotten.

I wish I had a \$1 for every-time a client came to me and said:
“one quote is almost \$15,000, but I’m getting the same kitchen for \$6,500”

The simple fact is you’re not.

Most small cabinet making operations are well meaning, however they lack design imagination and refuse to use better quality fittings and accessories (because of an inherent fear of losing your business due to the price becoming too high).

It is this fear of price that directs them to quote the cheapest possible method of making a kitchen. And that’s why they often do work for builders.

Mistake No 3. Never buy a kitchen through a builder.

Builders do not make kitchens (they sub-contract smaller cabinet makers to do it for them).

You should always consider taking the Kitchen contracts out of the housing agreement and hence have the builder provide a Prime Cost (PC) for the Cabinetry and Benchtops.

Prime cost allowance is the estimated price allowed for the kitchen to be built and is almost always based on the cheapest possible way of building a kitchen.

Most if not all builders approach small cabinetmakers with one question:

“How cheap can you build this Kitchen?”

The end result is that the cabinetmaker has to cut back his materials and labour to ensure he makes the price the builder is expecting (or risk losing the job).

The builder then adds his margin on top of the cabinetmaker price; this then becomes the price you are then offered.

Although common, this method of purchasing your kitchen is the most unsatisfactory, because should anything go wrong with the kitchen - the Builder blames the Cabinetmaker, and the Cabinetmaker the Builder!

You end up being caught in the run-around so to speak.

When you deal directly with the Cabinetmaker or Kitchen Company directly, you know who to talk to when mistakes need attention.



Design

When renovating or building your new kitchen, it's important to keep in mind that modern kitchen designs are orientated more to open living plans, resulting in the kitchen area becoming a focal point for many families.

The designer's job is to enhance your own ideas that you have developed from kitchen magazines and family discussions.

One of the most important questions you should ask yourself is, which kitchen layout best suits my style of cooking, and what features and accessories do I wish to incorporate into the design?

Do you require extra dining area? Many families often prefer to eat at a breakfast bar incorporated into the kitchen.

What about extra storage space or more benchtop area?

Adequate light is essential to a comfortable working kitchen so make sure you choose your lighting carefully (low voltage downlights are an excellent alternative to fluoro).

Selecting easy-clean surfaces such as Granite benchtops can greatly reduce cleaning times in the kitchen. Select a Splashback that is easy to clean and will not scratch easily (glass is rapidly becoming the most popular choice due to its ease of cleaning).

How to choose the best kitchen manufacturers

Avoid manufacturers that use chipboard as a carcass material; HMR board (highly moisture resistant) and MDF (Medium density fibreboard) are preferable to lower density boards which allow screws to loosen over time.

Cabinets should be screwed or glued together and have solid backs; avoid buying from manufacturers that use Masonite backs or staple their cabinets together.

Metal sided drawer units will outlast vinyl wrapped or HMR drawers, they also slide in and out much easier. Spending a few extra dollars on metal drawers is a good investment.

Adjustable Legs enabling you to adjust the benchtop height to a comfortable level whilst also protecting your kitchen from water damage. These legs are excellent when levelling cabinetry where the floor is uneven or sloping, and will give you design flexibility if I wish to add to your kitchen at a later date.

Benchtops made with gloss laminates scratch very easily. Matt and textured laminates are more durable and maintain their attractive look for many years.

Services that your kitchen company should provide

Computer Aided Design (CAD)

Do they have Computer Aided Design Services so you can clearly see what the kitchen may look like before you decide to buy?

Installation Options

Does the Company offer fully licensed tradespeople if I need them? Am I able to install the whole kitchen myself if I wish to do so? and can they recommend a plumber if mine can't do the job?

Factory Inspection, See the completed kitchen before you have it delivered

This is when the kitchen is finished and is then setup within the factory for you to view before it is delivered to your home. Clients can visit the manufacturer and inspect the final product first hand.

One of the main purposes in writing this guide is that many of customers cannot resist the temptation of a cheap price, and become overnight experts in deciding what constitutes a well made kitchen.

Over the 10 years I spent within the kitchen manufacturing industry, the majority of the people I met didn't have a clue, yet understandably a lot pretended to (for fear of appearing ignorant)

Often clients would attain three different quotes, but if put to the test they really didn't have any knowledge of the inherent differences between the three quotes (and usually decided on the basis of which of the salespeople they liked the most).

The best kitchen companies **don't use commission salesmen** and maintain very low overheads, which allow them to pass on the savings to you.

Intelligent manufacturing systems enable cost effective production, and factory inspections ensure complete satisfaction allowing you to see the final product before you pay for it.

What do I do now?

Visit us at Prestige Appliances and we can help you select your Kitchen Appliances.

We recommended doing this **before** you proceed with your getting your kitchen designed (simply because your kitchen designer will need all the appliance specifications to effectively design you a kitchen).

If this information has proven valuable and you and you would like some *recommendations as to who are Melbourne's best values for money kitchen manufacturers we can help.



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Have you read our FREE Kitchen Appliances Report?
<http://www.prestigeappliances.com.au/prestige.exe>

Find out the best way to save on European Kitchen Appliances.

*Referrals to kitchen manufacturers are not given over the phone.